Summer Recreation Safety

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Summer Recreation and the Military

- DoD spends $600 to $750 million per year to treat musculoskeletal injuries – a significant number are due to sports accidents.
- Injuries affect not only the service member but the mission as well.
- During Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Army reported its medical evacuations and hospitalizations were primarily for injuries sustained as a result of sports and recreational activities.
- The top injury producing activities included: basketball, softball, and flag football.
- Although recreational activities cannot be prohibited, it is important to conduct a risk assessment prior to starting the activity.
- Assess both external and internal risks. External risks would include the condition of the playing field, weather conditions etc. Internal risks include the physical shape and anatomies of the players involved.
- Perform a brief warm-up and stretching session lasting 5 to 10 minutes.
- Wear the appropriate footwear and other protective gear. Make sure gear is well maintained.

Common Recreational Hazards

- Sprains and strains:
  - Stiff, weak, unused muscles are more likely to be strained or pulled. This especially occurs in the ankles and wrists.
- Shin splints:
  - Running on hard surfaces can case shin muscles to become inflamed making running and walking painful.
- Slips and trips:
  - Slippery surfaces, quick turns, and improper footwear can all cause slips, trips, and falls.
- Blows:
  - Being hit by a ball and colliding with a wall or another player especially in the head or eye can be serious. Always wear protective gear and be aware of your surroundings.
- Overdoing it:
  - Long stretches of exertion without enough breaks make you more prone to problems such as muscle soreness, aches, and blisters. Be cautious – some of these problems might not show up until later.
- Weekend warriors:
  - Physical activity once a week does not get you into shape. Gradually increase time and intensity of the activity.
- Too much too soon:
  - After long periods of inactivity or an injury, the body is not ready for strenuous exertion. Again, gradually increase time and intensity of the activity.

General Sports Safety Tips

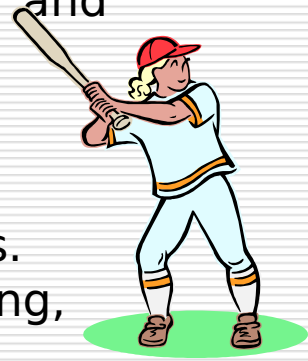
- Warm-up and stretch prior to an activity.
- Wear the appropriate protective gear such as knee pads, helmets, and mouth guards for the activity. Ensure that the gear is in good condition and fits properly.
- Wear quality shoes designed for that specific activity.
- Take breaks and maintain your hydration or fluid levels. Drink plenty before, during, and after the activity.
- Limit your activity to two hours. Allow adequate time to recover before beginning another session.
- Avoid overuse injuries by beginning slowly and gradually increasing the time and intensity of the activity.
- Acclimate yourself to the environment. Avoid heat or cold injuries.
- Be mindful of the weather if you are outside. Go indoors if severe weather approaches.
- If necessary, take lessons to familiarize yourself with the activity.

Basketball Safety

- In 2004, there were more than 1.6 million basketball related injuries reported in the US.
- It is imperative that you select the appropriate footwear. Footwear should fit snugly, offer support, and be non-skid.
- In addition to the proper footwear, players should have protective knee and elbow pads, a mouth guard, and safety glasses or glass guards if applicable.
- Never wear jewelry or chew gum while playing.
- Play only your position and know where other players are on the court to reduce the chance of collisions.
- Do not hold, block, push, charge, or trip opponents.
- Use proper techniques for passing and scoring.
- Avoid playing on poorly lit courts or in extreme weather.
- Outdoor courts should be free of rocks, holes, and other hazards while indoor courts should be clean, free of debris, and provide good traction.
- Baskets and boundary lines should not be too close to walls, bleachers, fences, or other structures. Basket posts should also be padded.

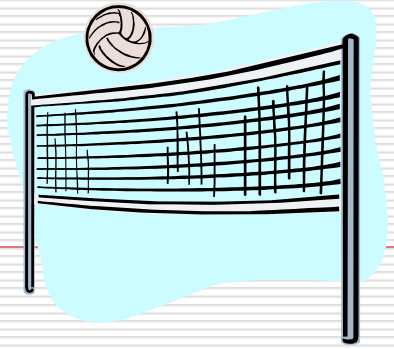
Baseball and Softball Safety

- More than 33 million people – the majority children - participate in organized baseball and softball leagues.
- The most common injuries sustained while playing are minor and include:
  - Abrasions or scrapes
  - Sprains and strains
  - Fractures
- Use softer-than standard baseballs and safety-release bases.
- Batting helmets with face guards should be worn when batting, waiting to bat, and running the bases.
- Catcher’s equipment should include the following: a catcher’s mitt, face mask, throat guard, long model chest protector, and shin guards.
- All players should wear shoes with molded cleats.
- Ensure that all protective gear fits properly and is worn correctly.
- Make sure to inspect the field for holes, glass, and other debris before the game begins.



Volleyball Safety

- Nearly 200,000 volleyball related injuries are sustained each year.
- Courts should have 23 feet of overhead clearance. Objects such as portable basketball goals, lighting fixtures, or tree limbs should be cleared from the space before play can begin.
- If the net is supported by wires, the wires should be covered with soft material. Also, never grab the net or hang onto its supports.
- Dress appropriately.
  - Wear defensive pants which are padded from hip to knee. They will protect you from floor burn and bruises.
  - Use knee pads to protect from injury when diving or falling onto the court.
  - Wear lightweight shoes that provide strong ankle and arch support and offer good shock absorption.
- Remember to always “call” the ball to reduce the chance of colliding with another player.

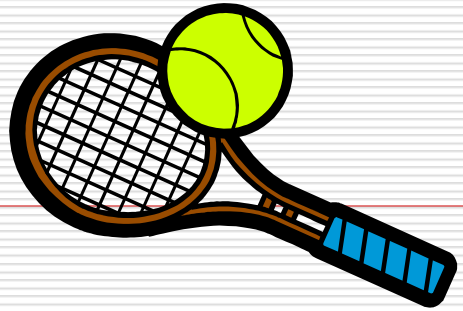


Soccer Safety

- Over 475,000 injuries are reported each year as a result of soccer.
- The playing surface should be in good condition. Inspect the field for holes, glass, and other debris. Fill any holes and reseed bare spots.
- Make sure the goal is anchored securely at all times and is well padded.
- Do not allow anyone to climb on the net or goal framework or hang from the crossbar.
- Remove the nets when goals are not in use.
- Wear shin guards and shoes with molded or ribbed soles.
- Use synthetic nonabsorbent balls on wet playing fields.

Tennis Safety

- Tennis injuries account for more than 78,000 hospital and medical office visits each year.
- Tennis elbow is the most common injury that is treated. It is a condition that develops from the repetitive and constrictive use of the forearm muscles.
- When serving or hitting overhead, do not arch your back unnecessarily. Instead bend with your knees and raise the heels. Avoid landing on the ball of your foot.
- Wear tennis shoes with good support to prevent ankle injuries. In addition, wear padded tennis socks or two pairs of regular socks.
- Dry the racket handle frequently to prevent blisters.
- Avoid playing on hard surface courts with no “give” such as cement, asphalt, or synthetic courts.



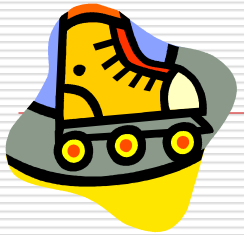
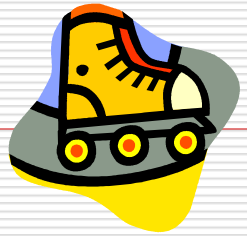
Golfing Safety

- Golfers must practice extreme caution when planning an outing. It is imperative that all outings be postponed when severe weather such as thunderstorms has been forecasted.

- Golfers suffer from elbow, spine, knee, hip, or wrist injuries. Most are overuse injuries. It is important to strengthen the muscles and learn the correct golfing techniques before playing.
- A good warm-up before hitting the links is to visit the driving range.

In-Line Skating Safety

- Over 26 million Americans participate in the sport.
- Injuries to the wrist, shoulders, tailbone, elbows, knees, and head from falls are common. The proper way to fall involves relaxing, lowing your center of gravity by bending at the waist, and falling forward.
- Always wear a helmet, gloves, knee and elbow pads, and other protective gear. Put on your protective equipment before your skates.
- Inspect your equipment and make any necessary repairs or replacements prior to skating.
- Skate boots must fit properly. Do not buy boots if there is too much pressure on any area of the foot or if the heel is able to move up and down within the boot.
- Skate in areas such as roller rinks, parks, and playgrounds that are free of traffic, pedestrians, obstacles, and surface irregularities.
- Use caution on inclines, ramps, and hills. Be careful near stairs and steps.
- Stay alert! Respect others in your path and do not wear headphones.
- When passing, announce your intentions verbally. Remember to stay to the right.
- Learn how to control speed and master stopping techniques.

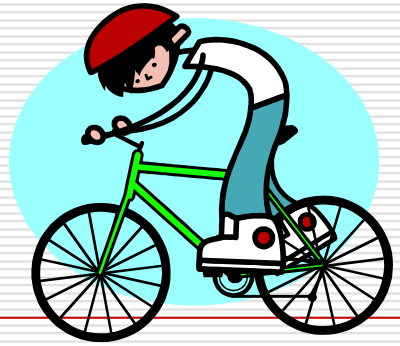
Skateboarding Safety

- In the US, there are over 50,000 visits to the emergency room associated with skateboarding accidents. Over 150 cases need to be hospitalized.
  - Injuries range from minor cuts and bruises to catastrophic brain injury.
  - Most hospitalizations involve head injuries.
  - Long-term injuries associated with skateboarding include loss of vision, hearing, and speech; inability to walk, bathe, toilet, dress or feed yourself; and changes in thinking and behavior.
- Children under 5 years of age should never skateboard. Children between the ages of 6 and 10 should have close supervision.
- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment to include - but is not limited to - a helmet, knee and elbow pads, wrist guards, and gloves.
- Use a quality skateboard. Skateboards are designed by use, experience level, type, and user's weight.
- Skate on smooth paved surfaces without any traffic. Avoid skating on streets, driveways, and surfaces with water, sand, gravel or dirt especially at night.
- Stay alert. Do not wear headphones.
- Respect others in your path. Learn how to control speed and master stopping techniques.
- Keep your equipment including your skateboard in proper working order.

Scooter Safety

- Nearly 30,000 children under the age of 14 visited emergency rooms last year due to scooter-related injuries
- Children under 8 years of age should not be using scooters.
- Always wear helmets, kneepads, and other protective gear such as wrist guards.
- Wear proper shoes.
- Ride on smooth, paved surfaces.
- Avoid riding on slippery or uneven surfaces, in crowded walkways or streets, and down steep hills.
- Never operate a scooter at night.
- Never ride near or in traffic.
- Avoid tricks and stunts.

Bicycle Safety

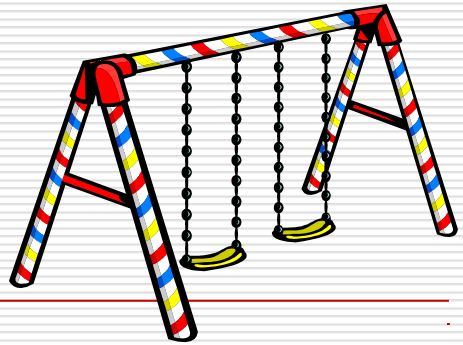


- Over 65,000 patients are seen in the emergency room each year in the US due to bicycle-related injuries.
  - Although injury rates are highest for children between the ages of 5 and 15, nearly 56% of fatally injured bicyclists are 20 years or older.
  - Three out of the four deaths that occurred are the result of head injuries.
- Wear a bicycle helmet. Your risk of serious injury or death will be reduced by 85%. Do not use a helmet after it has been involved in an accident even if it appears visually sound.
- Besides a properly fitted and strapped helmet, bicyclists should wear light or brightly colored clothing, knee pads, and other protective gear.
- Bicycles should be equipped with reflectors and have well maintained braking system, tires, chain, handlebars, and seat.
- Ride on smooth, paved surfaces and only during daylight hours. If you ride at dusk, install a white headlight in the front of the bicycle and a red tail light or reflector in the rear.
- Obey all traffic laws. When riding your bicycle, ride on the right side of the road with the flow of traffic. When you are in a group, form a single line on the side of the roadway. Be sure to leave room in case of sudden stops.
- Be alert to surface conditions and traffic all around you. Never wear headphones while biking.
- Your child should use a bike that is the right size for them. Never buy a bicycle that the a child needs to grown into or without having them try it out first.

Horseback Riding

- Of the estimated 30 million people who go riding each year, over 200,000 report being injured.
- While bruises, sprains, strains and fractures to the arms, wrist, shoulder, and elbow are the most frequent, the most serious injury is damage to the head and spine.
- Always wear a horseback riding helmet that is properly fitted and sturdy leather boots with a small heel.
- Before mounting the horse, ensure all riding equipment is secured. Novice riders and children should consider safety stirrups that break away if they fall off the horse.
- Novice riders should take lessons from an experienced instructor.
- Match the horse with the rider’s age, skill, experience level, and size. Novice riders should be matched with more experienced horses.
- Amateurs should ride open, flat terrain. Do not attempt jumps or stunts without supervision.
- Do not ride a horse when tired, taking medications, or under the influence of alcohol.
- Be aware that horses run from sudden noises and movements. When you ride, stay alert for anything that might startle the horse and be prepared to respond.
- If you feel yourself falling from the horse, try to roll to the side - away from the horse.

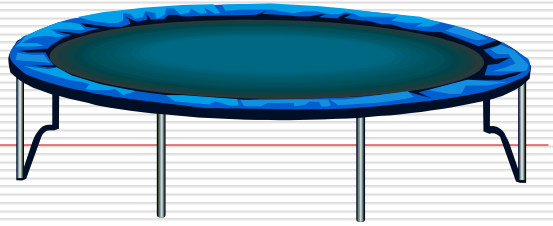
Playground Safety



- Over 200,000 children each year are seen in the emergency room for injuries sustained while at a playground.
  - The majority of the incidents occurred at public playgrounds. However, more deaths occurred on home playground sets.
  - Sixty percent of the injuries sustained were a result of falls from the slide, monkey bars, and swings.
- Always supervise your child on home and public playground equipment.
- Inspect the play equipment on a regular basis. Look for loose or worn hardware, protrusions\projections, splinters, cracks, missing guard or handrails, and deterioration\corrosion. Also, identify any tripping hazards such as rocks or tree roots.
- Ensure metallic pieces such as slides are cool to the touch to prevent burns.
- Children should avoid wearing clothing with drawstrings which can get caught in the equipment.
- Make sure children cannot reach any moving parts that might pinch or trap any body part.
- For home playground sets:
  - Use as least 9 inches of wood chips, double shredded bark mulch, or fine sand or gravel beneath and extending at least 6 feet from the playground equipment. Grass is not recommended as it can lose its shock absorption capacity over time.
  - Provide adequate clearance between play equipment.

Trampoline Safety

- An estimated 100,000 people are injured on a trampoline each year. This number has almost tripled in the past five years.
- Although two-thirds of the injured are children, adults should jump with caution.
- Injuries run the gamut of strain\sprains to broken bones to permanent paralysis or death.
- Causes of injuries include the following: landing wrong while jumping, attempting stunts, colliding with another person, falling or jumping off the trampoline, and landing on the springs or frame of the trampoline.
- Allow only one person on at a time. Do not allow somersaults
- Place the trampoline away from structures and other play areas. Use a shock absorbing pad that completely covers the springs. Install a netting or guard around the perimeter of the trampoline.
- It is advised that trampolines be used only during supervised training events such as gymnastics.



Camping Safety

- Scout the area before you sent up your tent.
  - Look for signs of animals or insects.
  - Ensure the area is flat, clear of debris, and far from cliffs, open fields, and moving water.
- Use a designated fireplace when possible. If not, dig a pit and surround it with rocks. Ensure the location is a safe distance from other campers, bedding, and underbrush.
- Watch the fire at all times and keep a safe distance. Always have a bucket of water or dirt nearby in case of an emergency.
- Never let a fire burn out by itself. Always put out the campfire with water or dirt.
- Use only a flashlight or battery operated lantern in the tent.
- Bring a sufficient supply of water with you. Consider your cooking as well as drinking water needs.
- Store food in a cooler inside a vehicle. Do not store food in a tent.

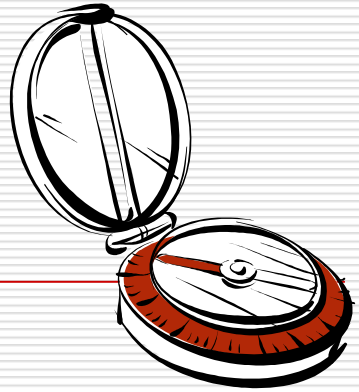
Camping Safety (cont.)

- Always plan for the unexpected.
- Familiarize yourself with the area's terrain and native plant and animal populations. Know the location of the nearest telephone or park ranger station.
- Before your trip, provide family and friends with an itinerary. Include your dates of departure and arrival, camp location, a description of your vehicle, and a list of your supplies.
- Pack clothes for rain, sun, heat, and cold.
  - Dress in bright-colored layers.
  - It is best to wear a long sleeve shirt and long pants. Tuck your pant cuffs into your socks.
  - To prevent blistering, wear comfortable hiking shoes or boots.
  - Wear a cap or hat to provide protection from the sun and insects.
- To protect from insects, use an insect repellant that contains DEET.
- Sign park registers before and after your trip.
- Never camp alone.
- Never feed wild animals or touch any unknown plant.
- At the end of each day, check your entire body for ticks.

Emergency Survival Kit

- Map of area
- Compass
- Flashlight with extra batteries and bulbs
- Extra food
- Extra clothing including raingear
- First aid kit
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Pocketknife
- Matches in waterproof container
- Adequate supply of clean drinking water
- Appropriate insect repellants

Hiking Safety



- Plan the hike from start to finish.
  - Always tell someone where you are going.
  - Check the weather. Time hikes to get back before dark.
  - Know how and where you can get help in case of an emergency.
- Never hike alone.
- Wear comfortable rugged shoes.
- Travel light and take only what you need. Do not forget to bring an emergency survival kit.
- If you become lost:
  - Remain calm and avoid panic.
  - Do not proceed in another direction unless you are sure of what you are doing.
  - If you do proceed, leave a note or mark the place with stones or sticks in a group of three which indicates help.
  - Attract attention with three distress signals, whistle blows, shouts, or flashes of light.
  - Make a small fire out of green wood which will make lots of smoke.
  - Try to keep warm, sheltered, and supplied with water.
- Never hike in the dark. Wait until morning to proceed.

Trail Rules

- Trails can be used for bicycling, hiking, walking, jogging, running, or skating.
- Be courteous.
- Keep to the right.
- Pass on the left. Before you pull out to pass:
  - Look ahead and back to make sure the lane is clear.
  - Leave ample separation between you and others.
  - Do not move back to the right until safely passed others.
  - Remember, faster traffic is responsible for yielding to slower oncoming traffic.
- Give audible signal when passing.
- Do not block the trail. Ensure that you and your group use no more than half of the trail.
- Yield when entering and crossing trails.
- Clean up litter.
- Use flashlights or light-colored, reflective clothing at night.

Top 8 Ways Pedestrians Get Hurt...

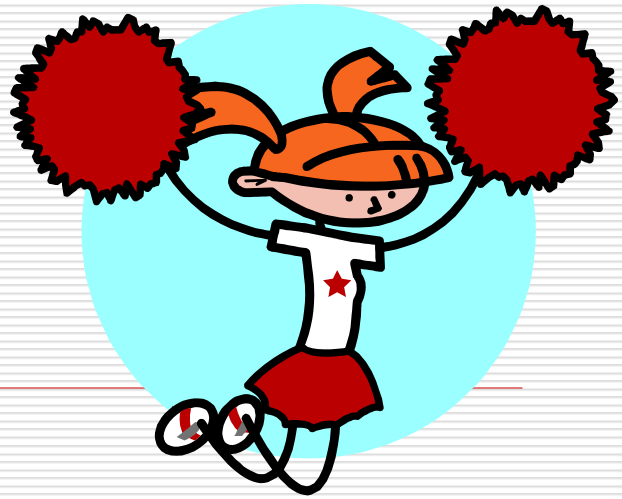
- Darting out from between parked cars
- Walking along the edge of a roadway
- Crossing a multi-lane street
- Crossing in front of a turning vehicle
- Going to or from an ice cream truck
- Crossing behind a vehicle that is backing up
- Dashing across an intersection
- Crossing in front of a stopped bus

Pedestrian Safety

- According to a 2005 statistics published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:
  - There were 4,881 pedestrians killed in traffic crashes in 2005 - that is one person almost every 2 hours.
  - In addition, over 64,000 pedestrians were injured in traffic crashes.
- Cross on the proper signal at identified crosswalks. Look both ways before crossing.
- Watch for cars. Do not assume traffic will stop. Continue looking and checking while crossing.
- Avoid crossing between parked cars.
- Always use sidewalks. Where there is no sidewalk and it is necessary to walk in the roadway, walk on the left as far from the road as possible facing traffic.
- Carry a flashlight or wear reflective material or light-colored clothing at night to help drivers see you
- Be extra alert in bad weather. Drivers have trouble seeing and stopping in bad weather.

Conclusion

- Every activity even walking has its own hazards.
- Follow a few general safety practices each and every time you play to reduce your risk of injury.
  - Warm-up and stretch.
  - Wear the required protective equipment.
  - Familiarize yourself with the activity.
  - Keep hydrated.
  - Be able to respond in an emergency.
- Be Safe – Stay Active!



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